

REMARKS

The Applicant has reviewed the history of the claims and submits that the above-presented claim set reflects the status of the claims now pending in this application. The Applicant understands that claims 2-6 and 18-20 are withdrawn. The Applicant notes that claims 8, 10, and 23 are canceled. The remaining claims are pending. The Applicant has presented numerous amendments to the claims in this amendment in order to clearly distinguish the newly cited Ranik reference as well as to define the type of material that is used to form the sidewall insert that supports the sidewall of the tire in an uncollapsed runflat operating condition. The Applicant submits that the amended claims are patentable and in condition for allowance. The Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to reenter claims 2-6 and 18-20 contending that claim 1 is generic. The Applicant recognizes that claims 2-6 and 18-20 will need to be amended before issuance.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 7-11, 17, 21, 22, and 24-33 under § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The Examiner submits that the claims contain subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventors, at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. The Examiner specifically notes that the term "uncollapsed" is not described in the specification. The Examiner explains that the original disclosure fails to describe the specific functioning of the sidewall insert in a runflat condition. The Examiner contends that there is no description that identifies how the respective sidewalls are deflected or to what degree the respective sidewalls are deflected in a runflat condition. The Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejection.

The Applicant has selected the term "uncollapsed" to describe a runflat tire that does not allow the inner sidewall regions to contact each other in a zero pressure condition as in the case of the Gardner prior art reference. The Applicant

submits that the specification fully supports the use of the word “uncollapsed”. The Applicant notes that one of the objectives of the invention is to provide a cantilevered runflat tire having “acceptable uninflated durability” page 4, line 3. The Applicant notes that acceptable uninflated durability is defined at page 2, lines 18-22 where a successful runflat tire is described as one that may travel at least 50 miles at 55 mph. The Applicant submits that the entire specification and all embodiments of the invention described in the specification refer to runflat tires that are designed to meet this standard. The Applicant further submits that collapsible, Gardner-type, interior contact safety tires do not meet this standard and are not considered to be “runflat” tires as the term is now used and understood in the runflat tire art. The Gardner-type of collapsible tires are used as safety tires to prevent an uninflated tire from separating from the rim after the tire has collapsed. The tires do not “run” in an uninflated condition. The Applicant thus submits that the term “uncollapsed” as used in the claims is supported in the originally-filed specification and distinguishes the claims from the Gardner reference.

In further support of the Applicant’s contention, the Applicant respectfully directs the Examiner’s attention to page 10, lines 3-7 of the specification. For the convenience of the Examiner, these lines read as follows:

The runflat capability of tire 10 is created by the radial stiffness of insert 70. The overall sidewall height of tire 10 is smaller than the sidewall height of a conventional tire thus causing the buckling strength of the column composed of the tire sidewall 60 and insert 70 to be much higher than could be achieved in a conventional tire using conventional insert technology.

The buckling strength referred to at this location in the specification is the strength of the sidewall to resist collapsing. An increased buckling strength prevents the sidewall from collapsing onto itself in the manner of the Gardner-type tires. The radial stiffness of insert 70 cooperates with the sidewall to prevent the sidewall from collapsing. Each of the independent claims has been amended to recite that the sidewall inserts are fabricated from a high modulus material. The use of a high

modulus material for the sidewall insert also supports the use of the term "uncollapsed" in the claims.

In view of the foregoing, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the § 112 rejection relating to the term "uncollapsed."

The Applicant respectfully submits that each of the claims is patentable over the Gardner reference. As discussed in the previous amendment, the Gardner reference is designed to collapse onto itself in a zero pressure operating condition to prevent the tire from separating from the rim. The Applicant submits that the independent claims having the term "uncollapsed" are distinguishable from the Gardner reference. In addition, each of the independent claims has now been amended to recite that the sidewall inserts are fabricated from a high modulus material. The Gardner sidewall inserts are fabricated from a low modulus material that allows the sidewalls to collapse. The Applicant respectfully directs the Examiner's attention to column 4, line 4 of the Gardner reference wherein the insert material is described as a soft, low modulus, high rebound, low-running temperature rubber compound. The Applicant submits that Gardner thus teaches away from the high modulus material now recited in each of the independent claims of the present application.

The Applicant notes that the Examiner has represented numerous rejections related to the Gardner reference including § 102(b) rejections and §103 rejections. The Applicant submits that the proper use of the term "uncollapsed" and the amendments related to the "high modulus material" distinguishes each of the independent claims from the Gardner reference. The Applicant thus submits that the § 102 and § 103 rejections based on Gardner have all been overcome.

The Examiner has presented a new § 102(b) based on US 4,203,481 to Ranik. The Examiner specifically rejects claims 1 and 7-11 as being anticipated by Ranik. The Examiner also rejects claims 32 and 33 as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, obvious over Ranik. The Examiner further rejects claim 17 as being obvious in view of Ranik in combination with Kobayashi and Nishikawa. The Examiner rejects claims 21 and 22 as being obvious in view of Ranik in view of

Spragg. The Examiner rejects claims 24-30 as being obvious in view of Ranik in view of Powers. Lastly, the Examiner rejects claim 31 as being obvious in view of Ranik in view of Hirayama. The Applicant respectfully traverses all rejections related to the Ranik reference. Ranik does not disclose a cantilever tire as invented and claimed by the Applicants. The Ranik tire does not have a body ply and a cantilever portion of the sidewall that is disposed between +30 degrees to -30 degrees with respect to the axis of rotation of the tire. The Applicant believes the Examiner is referring to the rim guard portions of the Ranik tire that extend outwardly from the sidewall. In order to distinguish the claimed invention from Ranik, the Applicant has amended each of the independent claims to define how the cantilever portion of the sidewall is defined. In particular, the Applicant has amended each of the independent claims to recite that the cantilever portion of the sidewall is configured such that a reference line tangent to the body ply in the cantilever portion of the sidewall is disposed at an angle in the range of +30 degrees to -30 degrees with respect to the axis of rotation of the tire. The Ranik body cords are not disposed in this range and are thus not disposed in a cantilevered portion of the sidewall. The Applicant thus submits that Ranik fails to disclose, teach, or suggest the invention now pending in the claims of the application.

In view of the foregoing, the Applicant respectfully submits that the amended claims overcome all of the rejections presented in the final Office Action. The Applicant again submits that independent claim 1 is a generic claim and that the withdrawn claims should be rejoined with the application subject to § 112 amendments that should be made to the claims. The Applicant thus most earnestly solicits the issuance of a formal indication that the claims are allowed and that the Applicant may rejoin the withdrawn claims with appropriate amendments. Please call Fred Zollinger at 330-244-1174 if any issues remain after this amendment.

Respectfully submitted at Canton, Ohio this 15th day of September, 2003.

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I hereby certify that this correspondence (Amendment D in application serial no. 09/607,070 filed June 29, 2000) is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to:

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Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on

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